

To the Honorable members of the General Administration and Elections Committee, and the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

I am writing to support full implementation of Early Voting, and also approval of a constitutional amendment to permit No-Excuse Absentee Balloting.

Last November the citizens of Connecticut overwhelmingly approved Early Voting. This Committee and the General Assembly should fully implement this mandate, for municipal elections this year and for primaries and elections beginning next year, including the presidential preference primary.

Dates and times for Early Voting should be broad enough to accommodate the needs of all our citizens: Early mornings (before commuting to work or other responsibilities) through evenings (comfortably after work and dinner) and at all times in between, on weekdays and weekends.

Same day registration should be available for early voters, as it is now for election day voters.

We should accommodate everyone who meets the qualifications to vote, and who wishes to vote. Voting is a fundamental right and responsibility of citizenship; it should not be a burden.

The General Assembly should also allow the citizens of Connecticut to vote, as a referendum item in November 2024, on whether to allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting. The large number of absentee voters in elections in recent years shows public support for allowing those who prefer to vote by absentee ballot to do so.

Experience in Connecticut and in many other states shows that absentee voting does NOT lead to fraud. It does provide for greater participation in this fundamental right and responsibility of citizenship. This strengthens our democracy.

No-excuse absentee voting accommodates the many citizens who cannot or do not wish to vote in person. Someone who is caring for a disabled parent or child, or who does not wish to broadcast their own disability, or whose immune system may be compromised, or who lacks transportation, or who simply feels safer voting at home, should not be required to disclose any reason for their choice.

During the pandemic, Connecticut allowed *de facto* no excuse absentee voting, by rightly declaring the pandemic a valid reason for absentee voting. Now that the pandemic is diminishing, we should continue to make voting safe and convenient for all qualified citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kenneth Speyer, New Britain, CT